Isølated (Nov To Dec 2025)
Editor : Yaver Javid

Editorial

Yaver Javid,
There is some art to writing. You might have very clear ideas in your mind but when you start to write it's a challenge to keep the text coherent. As I was editing an article that I had written way back. I found lines that had no place in the text. I don't like adding personal statements whenever recording something. I had to remove a lot of lines that were personal. During this period I have learned the use of the definite article "the" and its importance. Now I can somewhat write without the blue lines appearing.

I feel when you write you are more serious about what to write and what not to than when you are speaking. So I imagine that reading is more useful than listening. You can feel it when you are listening to a written work. It feels easy on the ears. Setting a tradition of writing provides an opportunity for some golden thoughts to be recorded. Maybe we can fish something out of the land of Kashmir.

آگے دی گئی شاعری ضیان صاحب کی ہے جو u/Constant-Reveal-2095 کے نام سے ریڈٹ پر ہے :

غزل (۱)

اُس سے مِل کر اُس سے بچھڑنے کا جی کرتا ہے
رات بھر ترے وصل کی اُمید میرا دل بھرتا ہے
اُس سے بُرا بولوں تو بُرا بھی کیا بولوں
اُس سے بے وفائی کے سِوا کیا آتا ہے
کبھی کبھی جہلم کے کنارے بیٹھ کر
لہروں کے ساتھ جانے کا چاہتا ہے
تمہاری یادوں کے سائے سے باہر نِکل کر
پھر تم سے دِل لگانے کو دِل کرتا ہے
وہ ہاتھوں میں مہندی لگا کر تیار ہو چکا ہے
پھر یہ دِل ہے کہ اور کوئی اُمید چاہتا ہے

غزل نما (۲)

وہ بچھڑ بھی گیا کتنے سلیقے کے ساتھ،
مجھے چھوڑ کے گیا کتنے سوالوں کے ساتھ۔

مجھے میری خیالوں میں نیند بھی نہیں آتی،
کروٹ بھی بدلتا ہوں تو تیرے خیال کے ساتھ۔

بنایا تھا سکون تُو نے میری بے چینی کو،
کیوں چھوڑا ہے مجھے پھر سے اندھیروں کے ساتھ؟

محبت میں بھلا میں اور کیا کر سکتا تھا،
تجھے جانے بھی دیا ہے تیری خوشی کے ساتھ۔

غزل نما (۳)

میں کیا کہوں اُس میں اچھا کیا تھا
وہ بچھڑ گیا، ورنہ اُس میں بُرا کیا تھا

بھروسا فقط عشق پر تھا ہمارا
وگرنہ بھلا اِس میں رکھا کیا تھا

تعلّق توڑ کر وہ بھول بیٹھا
آخر یہ جینا تنہا کیا تھا

غزل (۴)

قریب اتنا تھا کہ اُس کی آہٹ سُنا نہ سکا مَیں
دوری اتنی تھی کہ اسے واپس بُلا نہ سکا مَیں

اُس کے پاس بیٹھ کے لگا زمانے کی باتیں کر لی
بڑی دیر بعد یاد آیا کچھ بتا نہ سکا مَیں

اُس نے اپنی بے وفائی قبول کی پورے شہر میں
ایسا کون سا وعدہ تھا جو نبھا نہ سکا مَیں

زِیانؔ نے ساری کہانی چُھپا کے رکھ لی
افسوس وہ ایک حرف بھی اس کو سُنا نہ سکا مَیں

آگے دی گئی شاعری یاور جاوید کی ہے :

اَہنگِ ہنگامہِ آبِ بارِش

یہ اَہنگِ ہنگامہِ آبِ بارِش باراں — یہ خاموشیِ گھٹّا شبِ دل کش

یہ ترنمِ فطرت، یہ موجِ بحرِ خیالِ شاعر — یہ بھی سجائے ہوئے ہیں یہ گھٹّا شبِ دل کش

رات کی تاریکیوں میں یہ خیالِ روشن — بہی ہے خامات سے خیالات کی روشنی

کچھ ایسی کہ حیرت نہ ہوتی کبھی خِزاں — کچھ یہ خامۂ رفت و بود بھی لکھے دگرگوں

کسی سبز چمن کو کریں آغوش پذیر — کریں بیاں کسے گوشے کو با آہنگِ بے نظیر

The Food of Kashmir

Yaver Javid,

A kashmiri wakes up to first drink tea or it would be appropriate to say eats bread with the tea. The tea is noon chai which means “salty tea”. First tea leaves are boiled with water to make a concentrate, which is done usually a night earlier. Then when you want to drink it you would add milk, salt and boil it. It is pinkish in colour. You would drink it with roti or any form of bread. Dip and eat or throw it all in and then eat with the help of the spoon are the two options.

Traditionally noon chai is prepared in a special copper utensil called samawar, which is a kettle shaped utensil with a circular pipe going through the middle in which burning charcoal is added to cook and keep it warm. It gives the tea a smokey flavour. It's not used now on a daily basis. It's hard to operate, only feasible in large joint families which are now rare. Although it continues to be used in weddings.

It's followed by a cup of sugar tea usually between 10-11am. Kashmiris eat bread with their tea. It's usually one cup only.

Usually at home among the things that you eat with tea you would only make rotis at home. Rotis are made using three general varieties of flours namely: wheat flour, rice flour & corn flour. The rice and core is cultivated locally. Generally in both urban and rural areas people will cultivate their basic needs. This includes vegetables, rice, corn, fruits and oil. Provided you have land which most possess because land redistribution was recently done in the 1950's.

Rice makes "*tomle-cxotchy*" (lit. rice bread) that is the same as the *plain dosa*. Traditionally food was cooked on fire. A special pottery utensil was used called "*kres*" on which you would cook the dosas. The other ones called “*maed-cxotchy*” (wheat bread) or “*makä-cxotchy*” (corn bread) are generally cooked on a pan. They have chapatti like texture. They are first mixed with water to create dough which then is shaped into thin circular discs. Then they are

baked on the pan. A little bit of ghee might be added to help it cook. Several hot dosas with hot noon chai on a snowy day is unbeatable.

The traditional breads we buy from outside are from the "*kandur", a local* baker who bakes *"Cxotchwory", "Aapycxotchy", "Lawase", "Kultche", "Girde", "Schilmaar", "Baekerkhany", "Khan-cxotchy"* etc. A typical "*Kandur*" will only have the first three or first four. Others can be bought from main bakeries. "*Cxotchwory"* and "*Aapycxotchy"* are made on the walls of the drum like an oven. It's lit inside on the bottom & and open from above. *"Cxotchywor"* is small doughnut shaped although without the hole going through. It's only a deep indent from top side. Its crust is hard & crunchy and the core called *"gool"* is soft.

Then we consume rice at lunch. The Zuhr Aazan marks the time. Boiled rice which is traditionally cooked by first washing the rice then boiling it with some water until it comes to a boil. Then the water is removed and then it's left to cook on a low flame until it's cooked. One funny word used particularly in some parts of north kashmir is *"bate-mcttur"* which means "rice motor" and refers to the rice cooker. The rice is a new variety which was introduced by Sheikh Abdullah which gives more rice. I don't know much about it but, a way of mine is trying to describe its quality by using a comparison with rice that is given by the government ration shops. It is a subsidy system. The local rice is something that you could eat raw and it actually tastes good. As kids we would mix sugar with it and eat it as a snack. Not as many times as the older ones have done. The rice from ration shops which come from outside is bitter and almost has no flavour. It is generally consumed by the poor and those who want to lose weight.

Kashmiris eat a heavy serving of rice. It is eaten alongwith cooked vegetables called *"sün".* Sün includes the occasional meat but daily meat consumption is something very few can afford. Kashmiris eat meat on a weekly or monthly basis as per their financial condition.

The vegetables that Kashmiris consume include collards, onions, carrots, radishes, turnips, peas, tomatoes, cauliflowers, cabbages, bottle-gourd, potatoes, eggplants, beans, dals, spinach, pulses and many others. The general method is to first fry the vegetables in a heavy amount of oil then by adding water, salt, kashmiri chilli powder, turmeric and optionally other spices. The Kashmiris eat rice with *sün* by mixing it with rice. They eat using their right hand.

Kashmiris usually have a collection of zinc-coated copper utensils. A set of cooking *degs*, few *thal-ban* (rice eating utensil for men), few *kenze* (rice eating utensil for women), few "*donge"* (traditional *sün* storing utensil), few "*tramy"* (a large plate in which four people eat from four sides) are the classics. A style of these copper utensils is *kandkaer.* Which have handmade indented designs upon them.

The vegetables are also dried for consumption in the winters.

Vegetables generally are cooked solo or in pairs or triplets & rarely in a larger mix. Potato-onion, collard-potatoes, brinjal-tamato, dried bottle gourd-razma just to name a few.

The milk or curd might also be eaten "mixed with the rice".

The paneer, meat and eggs when available are added to the *sün* after frying. Boiled eggs are fried first before adding them to *sün*.

The meat includes chicken, mutton and beef. Beef was banned in Kashmir. Beef is found everywhere in Kashmir especially after 1990's when Kashmiri Hindus left.

Pickles (“*antchar”*) are also sometimes consumed with rice. It is generally a pickle of carrots, radishes and collards.

Then around 4 pm noon chai is consumed again. Dinner is the same thing as lunch. Lunch is mostly consumed after the Isha prayers.

In Ramadan the rice is eaten alongwith noon Chai at *sehri* (just before the dawn) and then the fast is generally broken at dusk with dates or “*babry-tresh”*. A sweet pudding called “*feeriny”* is consumed. It is milk, suji and sugar boiled together. Then followed by rice immediately. Then after sometime the noon chai is consumed.

Wazwan is a class of kashmiri cuisine that is consumed by the rich and the poor middle class eats it in weddings. It is a series of meat dishes like “*Riste”, “Goshtaab”, “Kabaab”, “Tabakhmaaz”, “Aabgosch”, “Korme”* etc. Traditionally they are served with rice. In weddings the rice is served at lunch on a “*tramy”* (a big plate on which four people eat). A lot of meat is poured onto the “*treamy”* one dish after another. So much that you cannot eat it all so you have to pack some home. Although not so long ago it was served in a normal quantity but now has evolved into this. Before the escalation of militancy in the 1990's the food in weddings was served at night as the dinner. Now along with carnivals and cinema halls it might come back.

A Childhood, I Still Carry With Me

Aenaam Rashid

Childhood has a way of making life feel effortless. Back then, everything revolved around play, friends, and small worries that felt huge,like unfinished homework or the fear of a teacher’s punishment. Nothing beyond the next day really mattered. We spoke about silly things, acted without overthinking, and never cared about how the world saw us. Even when our parents scolded us for doing something foolish, it didn’t change much,we were just children, living freely without understanding how quickly those days would pass.

One of the best phases of my childhood was the time I spent at my maternal home. My days there had a rhythm of their own. I would wake up around seven, and my grandfather would fetch the lawas and prepare Lipton tea for me. I always had it with butter, it was a small routine that felt special in a way I didn’t understand back then. Before I left for school, he would slip five rupees into my hand, sometimes even ten, and it felt like treasure. I usually bought a three-rupee milk ice cream and spent the rest either sharing with friends or picking up something small for myself. Evenings were for cricket, where I mostly lost, and carrom, where I almost always won. Some days were rough, but that time at Matamaal still remains one of the happiest stretches of my life.

Even today, as I study in college and push myself to build a future, I often find myself missing

the child I once was. Life wasn’t perfect back then, but it carried a kind of effortless happiness that adulthood rarely offers. Growing up showed me how quickly the world shifts, from carefree mornings to responsibilities that don’t pause for anyone. Yet, those memories from childhood remind me that a softer, lighter version of myself still exists somewhere within me. Maybe that’s why, every now and then, it becomes important to let that inner child breathe again.

Kashmiri Folklore Mythological Creature

MythosKasperia

"my research it's still not complete – MythosKasperia"

Rantas

She's perhaps the most iconic Kashmiri monster, especially in winter tales. A witch, her backward feet (a motif also found in other Himalayan folklores) symbolize inversion of nature, beauty turned deadly. The Rantas myth often reflects male fears of female autonomy, as she is independent, sexual, and predatory. Some scholars liken her to the Greek lamia or Slavic rusalka. A witch and a seductress, with feet turned backwards. She is known to kidnap men, and eat out their hearts. She seeks partners amongst mortals, but their attachment has fatal consequences. She hides her body with long hair that reaches her feet. She can change form at will, often pretending to be an attractive woman.

Wai Wuf:

Perhaps the most playful and mysterious spirit in Kashmiri folklore. A nocturnal creature can be commanded by his cap. Some believe the Wai Wuf to be an animal, similar to a cat or dog moving around desolate houses. Others think it is a midget. Its powers lie in its cap, and once a human is in possession of that, they can control the Wai Wuf till the sly creature repossesses its cap, something that isn't rare given how cunning and sharp witted it is. The cap of power motif exists in many Indo-Iranic and Turkic myths (Huma bird or peri's cap in Persian legends). The Wai Wuf's link to abandoned houses also connects it to domestic spirits like European brownies or Russian domovoi.

Reading Section

This section contains some excerpts from old books relevant to Kashmir.

From Tuzuk e Jahangiri:

Jahangir,

On Thursday, the 14th, I encamped in the pargana of Chandala. Thence on Saturday, the 16th, making one stage in the middle, I came to Hafizabad2 I stayed in the station which had been erected by the exertions of the karori of that place, Mir Qiyamu-d-dm. Having reached the Chenab in two marches on Thursday, the 21st Zi-1-hijja, I crossed the river by a bridge which had been built there, and my camp was pitched in the neighbourhood of the pargana of Gujrat. At the time when His Majesty Akbar went to Kashmir, a fort had been built on that bank of the river. Having brought to this fort a body of Gujars who had passed their time in the neighbourhood in thieving and highway robbery, he established them here. As it had become the abode of Gujars, he made it a separate pargana, and gave it the name of Gujrat. They call Gujars a caste which does little manual work and subsists on milk and curds. On Friday I pitched at Khawasspiir, five kos from Gujrat, founded by Khawass Khan, a slave of Shir Khan Afghan. Thence, with two halts in the middle, I pitched on the bank of the Bihat (Jhelam). On that night a great wind blew and a black cloud hid the face of the sky. The rain was of such violence that old men remembered none such. It turned to hail, and every hailstone was the size of a hen's egg. From the flooding of the river and the force of the wind and rain, the bridge broke. I, with the inmates of the harem, crossed in a boat. As there were few boats, I ordered the men not 1 to cross in these, but to rebuild the bridge. It was finished in a week, and the whole army crossed with ease. The source of the Bihat is a spring in Kashmir called the Vir-nag ; in the language of India a snake is vir-nag. Clearly there had been a large snake at that place. I went twice to the spring in my father's lifetime ; it is 20 kos from the city of Kashmir. It is an octagonal reservoir about 20 yards by 20. Near it are the remains of a place of worship for recluses ; cells cut out of the rock and numerous caves. The water is exceedingly pure. Although I could not guess its depth, a grain of poppy-seed is visible until it touches the bottom. There were many fish to be seen in it. As I had heard that it was unfathomable, I ordered them to throw in a cord with a stone attached, and when this cord was measured in gaz it became evident that the depth was not more than once and a half the height of a man. After my accession I ordered them to build the sides of the spring round with stone, and they made a garden round it with a canal ; and built halls and houses about it, and made a place such that travellers over the world can point out

few like it. When the river reaches the village of Pampur, at a distance of ten kos from the city, it increases, and all the saffron of Kashmir is obtained in this village. I do not know if there is so much saffron in any other place in the world. The annual crop is 500 maunds by Hindustan weight, equal to 5,000 vilayat (Persian) maunds. In attendance on my revered father, I went to this place at the season when the saffron was in flower. On other plants of the world, first the branches (stems) shoot out and then the leaves and flowers. On the contrary, when the saffron stem is four fingers breadth from the dry ground, its flowers shoot out, of the colour of the iris, with four petals, and in the middle are four threads (risha) of an orange colour like that of the flower, and of the length of a finger-joint. This is the saffron. The land is not ploughed or irrigated, the plant springs up amongst the clods. In some places its cultivation extends for a kos, and in others for half a kos. It looks better from a distance. At the time of plucking, all my attendants got headache from its sharp scent. Though I drank wine and took a cup, I too got headache. I asked the animal-like Kashmiris, who were employed in picking the flowers, how they felt. I ascertained that they had never experienced headache in their lives. The waters from the spring Vir-nag and of other streams and nullahs that join from right and left form the river Bihat, which passes through the heart of the city. Its breadth in most places is not more than a bowshot.3 No one drinks its water, because of its heaviness and indigestibility. All the people of Kashmir drink the water of a lake that is near the city, and is called Dall. The river Bihat enters this lake and flows through to the Panjab by the Baramula Pass, Pakli, and Dantur. In Kashmir there is plenty of water from streams and springs.By far the best is that of the Lar valley, which joins the Bihat in the village of Shihabu-d-clln-pur. This village is one of the celebrated places of Kashmir, and is on the Bihat. About a hundred plane-trees (chinar) of graceful form clustered 1 together on one plot of ground, pleasant and green, join each other so as to shade the whole plot, and the whole surface of the ground is grass and trefoil 2 ; so much so that to lay a carpet on it would be superfluous and in bad taste. The village was founded by Sultan Zainu-l-'abidin, who for 52 years ruled Kashmir with absolute sway. They speak of him as the great Padshah. They tell many strange customs of his. There are many remains and traces of buildings of his in Kashmir. One of these is in the midst of a lake called Wulur, and of which the length and breadth are more than three or four kos. It is called Zain-lanka, and in making it they have exerted themselves greatly. The springs of this lake are very deep. The first time they brought a large quantity of stone in boats and poured it on the place where now the building stands it had no result. At last they sank some thousands of boats with stones, and with great labour recovered a piece of ground 100 gaz by 100 gaz out of the water, and made a terrace, and on one side thereof the Sultan erected a temple for the worship of his supreme God. Than this there is no finer place He often came to the spot by boat and engaged in worship of the King of Wisdom. They say he spent many " forty days " in that place. One day a wicked son of his came to that place to kill him, and finding him alone, drew a sword and went in. When his eye fell on the Sultan, however, on account of his venerable dignity and the might of his virtues, he became confused and bewildered and turned away. The Sultan shortly after came out and seated himself in the boat with this same son, and started for the city. On the way he said to his son, " I have forgotten my rosary ; get into a canoe and fetch it for me." The son having gone into the temple sees his father in the same place, and the graceless man with complete shame of face falls at his father's feet and asks pardon for his fault. They have told many tales of such miracles as this of him, and they say also that he had well practised the science of khala'.1 When, from the ways and methods of his sons, he perceived in them signs of haste in seeking for rule and government, he would say to them, " To me it is very easy to abandon rule, and even to pass away from life, but when I am gone

you will do nothing, and the time of your prosperity will not endure long, but in a short time you will obtain the recompense of your evil deeds and your own dispositions." Having spoken thus, he gave up eating and drinking, and passed forty days in this manner. He made not his eye acquainted with sleep, and employed himself after the manner of men of piety and austerity in the worship of God Almighty. On the fortieth day he gave up the

deposit of his existence, and entered into the mercy of God. He left three sons — Adam Khan, Hajl Khan, and Bahrain Khan. They quarrelled with each other, and all three were ruined. The government of Kashmir was transferred to the tribe of the Chaks, who belonged to the class of the common soldiers of the country. During their dynasty three of the rulers constructed buildings on three sides of the terrace formed by Zainu-l-'abidln in the Wulur Lake, but none of these is as strong as his.

Note From The Editor : This text is straight up copied from the scanned pdf, it might have errors.